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Crown of Life,

The Reward of

FAITHFULNESSE.

BEING A

SERMON

Preached Septemb. 12. 1661.

At the Funerals of Mr. *William Taylor*, M. A.
Minister of the Gospel, at Saint Stephens
Coleman-street, London.

By *William Spurstowe*, D. D. Minister of the Gospel
at Hackney, near London.

*Cum omnes virtutes currant in stadio, sola perseverantia
accipit bravium. Aug.*
Nam quadratur in Christianis initia sed finis. Hierom.

LONDON,

Printed for Ralph Smith, at the Bible in Cornhill,
near the Royal Exchange. 1662.

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Crown of Life

The Word of

FALL THE GUNESSE

BEING

SERMON

At the Funeral of M^r. William T. M. A.
Minister of the Gospel, at Saint Andrew
Church, London.

By William Spurgeon, D. D. Minister of the Gospel
at Mark Lane, near London.

Can anyone estimate the value of his profession?
Ang. Non querunt in Christianis nisi sed fidei. Hic om.

LONDON

Printed for Ralph Smith, at the Bible in Church,
near the Royal Exchange, 1861.

To the Right Honourable Lady,

A N N E,

Countess of

Balcarres, &c.

Right Honourable,



HIS slender Sermon, I am fully sensible, is by its Publication, and by its Dedication, made two things, for which it is very unmeet: By its Publication, it becomes a kind of monument for a worthy friend, and faithful servant of Christ, whose name deserves rather to be engraven in a lasting Pillar of marble, than in this perishing Paper, which cannot add so much to him, as it receives from him. By its Dedication, it is made a tender of my service to your Honour, which should not have been done by so mean an address as this is, but in a way more answerable to your worth and goodness, and therefore I had wholly desisted from this work, had I not been animated thereunto by a double plea.

1. After its preaching, you were pleased to let fall some such expressions, as that you hoped it might ere long come abroad, which words did sway the more with me, in regard I might thereby take an occasion to testify my thankfulness in the behalf

The Epistle Dedicatory.

of him, to whom you were pleased to shew much kindness whilst he lived, and now to continue your bounty unto his, in taking upon you the care and education of one of his sons.

2. I was willing, among others, to express my unfeigned-rejoicing, in your happy recovery from a long and dangerous sickness, beseeching God to renew and double your former strength, that you may long continue in the land of the living, as an instrument of good, and an example of holiness; that great Personages may see, that it is not only their duty, but their glory, to serve God above others, who hath made them to shine like Suns in the Firmament, when others twinkle like Stars; and now I have no more to say in my own behalf, but that I made some stay of its coming forth for a time, that I might the more cheerfully present it to your Honours hands. All that I shall take leave to speak to your self, is, That the practice of faithfulness is a most reasonable duty for you to exercise; sickness is the time of making vows, and health the time of paying them; and if what I here offer, may any way tend to the strengthening of your hands in God, I shall rejoice, and make that my prayer for you, which was the Apostles counsel to the elect Lady. That you may look to your self, that you lose not those things which you have wrought, but that you may receive a full reward. So I remain,

Madam,

Your Honours,

Haskins,

Decemb. 4.

1661.

In all Christian service,

WILLIAM SPURSTOWE.



THE
Crown of Life,

THE
REWARD of FAITHFULNESSE.

REVEL. 2. 10.

*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee
a Crown of Life.*

SOME parcels of holy Scripture may not un-
faily be compared to the Libbet, or end of a
piece of *Aray*, in which, he that beholds on-
ly some particular part, may happily conceive
the hand or foot which he sees, to be very un-
skillfully made: but unfolding the whole, soon finds, that
it carries a due symmetry and proportion to the body.
In the handling therefore of such Scriptures, it is necessa-

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ry, not only to unfold the *Text*, but the *Context*; that so by the joynt explication of both, those divine Truths that lie wrapped up in them may appear in their full dimensions, which else by an incompleat and partial representation must needs be disfigured, and lose much, both of their harmony and beauty: But this *Text*, though it be a single sentence, excerp'd from the body of the *Epistle*, and *Verse* also in which it stands, yet it is so entire in its sense, so pregnant in its worth, as that the least stay, in pointing to what goes before, or to what follows after, will rather hinder, than expedite my Progress in what I design to speak unto.

These words then, are an heavenly counsel of our Saviour to the *Angel* of the Church of *Smyna*, animating them to an unbended constancy in their Profession amidst those extream difficulties and foretribulations which Christ foretels should befall them, through Satans rage, and the violence of bloody Persecutors: They naturally branch themselves into two parts, a *Precept*, and a *Promise*; the one containing mans *Duty*, and the other Gods *Beauty*.

1. A *Precept*, enjoyning fidelity, *Be then faithful*; A Duty so essential to the being of Christianity, as that it is both the *disjunctive* and *constitutive* difference of every true Believer, that which makes him really to be what he is, and distinguisheth him from others, who follow Religion, *propter famam, non propter conscientiam*, for credit and reputes sake, not for conscience.

2. A free *Promise* annexed, the hope of which may be a reviving Cordial in their sufferings, and the certain performance an ample Reward after their sufferings; *and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

In the *Precept*, we may consider *two*, *viz.* *consequenter*

First, The *Person* upon whom the Duty is incumbent, *Be thou faithful*. This Pronoun *Thou*, is not *restrictive*, but *extensive*; not fixing the Duty upon one individual, but indefinitely, charging it upon all; like an ingenious and well-made picture, it faceth every beholder; as a center in a circle, it carrieth an equal respect to all the parts of the circumference; it is as a Cock, that croweth to every man, and not to *Peter* only.

Secondly, The term and boundary of the Duty, *Be thou faithful unto death*; which is not to be understood *exclusively*, but *inclusively*. Death must not separate, but seal the fidelity of a Christian: Life, as well as other accommodations, must be little set by, in respect of Christ and his Truth, when it comes in competition with it. The resolution of that rich and noble Virgin in *Basil*, was truly masculine, who, when condemned to the fire for being a Christian (but offered both life and estate upon compliance to the worship of the Heathenish Idols) cried out, *Valeat vita, pereat pecunia*; let life go, let money perish; and alike honourable is that Testimony given to those Worthies, who overcame the great Dragon, that *they loved not their lives unto the death*, Revel. 12. 11.

In the *Promise*, two particulars also are observable.

First, The *Given*, Christ, expressed by way of Emphasis, *I will give thee*; I, who am the first and the last, who was dead, and am alive, Revel. 2. 8. I, who am the *Awener*, the faithful and true Witness, Revel. 3. 14. I, to whom power is given over all flesh, that I should give eternal life, John. 17. 3. Oh! how secure is the happiness of every Believer, who hath the word of such a person to reward all his services; and to crown all his labours: who is holy,

and cannot lye; who is immutable, and cannot repent; who is omnipotent, and cannot be hindred.

Secondly, The Gift or Reward, a Crown of life, in which are three remarkable circumstances.

1. *The Identity, or oneness of the Gift:* As the work is the same which is required of all, so the wages are the same which are given unto all, not a penny, as in the Vineyard, but a *Crown*, as in the Race; none that are faithful shall be without a Crown, though there may be some accidental differences. The glory of Heaven is not *Gavel-kind*, in which every son of heir-male inherits an equal portion of his Ancestors estate: We may (as I conceive) piously believe that it is consonant to Scripture, as well as to the stream of Antiquity, that there are degrees of glory; but not according to the *Roman Scale*, who have hammered and beaten out certain little Crowns, which they ascribe only to *Virgins*, to *Martyrs*, to *Doctors*, and are produced from their own extraordinary merits, not from the immediate Rayes of Christs glory shed upon them; but sure the metall must be *Alchymy*, and not *Gold*.

A second, is the dignity of the Gift: A Crown is the Emblem of Majesty, and aply noteth that great honour to which the faithful are exalted in Christ, *Luk 22. 10. I appoint unto you a Kingdom*; What is eternal life, but a *Coronation day*? Doth not the Scripture in describing of it, set it forth by such a solemnity in all its parts? The *Robes* which the faithful must be clothed with, are the long white Robes of Righteousness; the *Oyle* with which they must be anointed, is the oyle of gladness; the *Scepter* which must be put into their hand, is a Scepter of power to bruse their enemies under their feet; the *Throne* upon which they must sit, is a Throne of glory; the *Feast*

at which they must eat, is the great Supper of the Lamb; and the *presence* in which all must be transacted, is the presence of the holy Angels.

A third, is the *perpetuity* of the Gift: It is a *Crown of life*, and so stands in a direct opposition unto the Crowns of mortal Princes, which have neither *life*, nor *length*. The gold and gems of which they consist, are both *lifeless* and *corruptible*; but they that wear them are far more transient and fading: How inconsiderable oft-times is the distance between the *joyful Coronation*, and the *sad Funerals* of the same Prince? How soon are the *poudered Ermins* exchanged for a *winding sheet*? The *stately Palace*, for a small *Urn*? And the *Royal Collar of Esses* sparkling with Diamonds, for the *ignoble bonds* of death and darkness? But so it is not with Believers, their dignity and their persons have both an *endless life*, as being wholly above all violence from without that may assault it, and perfectly free from any principle of mortality from within which may dissolve it; else could they not be perfectly happy, for it is Eternity alone which makes a good to be infinitely better, and an evil infinitely worse.

I have now shewed you that a rich Treasure may lie in a small compass; and that a little spot of the land of *Canaan* may bring forth a plentiful Harvest, when in this one promise are not only scattered ears of Corn, which like the Disciples, we may rub in our hands, and eat in our journey, but loaden wains of heavenly grain, which like the rich man in the Gospel, we may treasure up, and freely live upon, until we come to be truly above the use of means, and to derive our happiness immediately from the fruition of God, both in respect of *presence*, and of *influence*. But it cannot be expected that in one hour such an ample harvest should

should be reaped, or that all the foregoing particulars should be insisted upon by me, I shall therefore without breaking the order of the words, begin with the *Precepts*, *Be thou faithful unto the death*.

And in the Explication of it, I propose three Queries.

First, What this faithfulness is, which is the Duty enjoined.

Secondly, Upon what grounds it is absolutely necessary.

Thirdly, Why it must be persevered in unto death.

First, What *fidelity* or *Faithfulness* is. In Scripture it undergoes a various and differing acceptation, sometimes it is put for the steadfastness and assurance of belief, as it is opposed unto an absolute diffidence, such as was in *Thomas*, who was resolved not to believe the Resurrection of his Lord, unless he might both see the print of the Nails, and thrust his hand into his side, that so his faith might have the security of the touch, as well as of the eye: Now to him Christ saith, *Be not faithless, but faithful*, John 20. 27. Sometimes it is taken for the profession of Christian Religion, *If any faithful man or woman have Widows, let them minister unto them*, 1 Tim. 5. 16. Sometimes it signifies the unquestionable verity of speech, *This is a true and faithful saying*, 1 Tim. 4. 9. In other places it imports a careful and conscientious discharge of ones trust, in that station and office to which he is called. Thus *Moses* is said to have been faithful in all Gods house, as a servant, *Hebr.* 3. 5. And Christ to have been a *merciful and faithful High Priest in things concerning God*: He left nothing undone that might reconcile man to God, and expiate the sins of his people. Sometimes it is used

for

for an unshaken and firm continuance in the Truth, when faith in Christ is seconded with faithfulness unto Christ: Thus *Antipas* is stiled a *faithful Martyr*, Revel. 2. 13. And those that are with Christ, are said to be called, *chosen* and *faithful*, Revel. 17. 14. I shall not need to re-assume these several senses, and cause them to pass before you, as *Jesse* did his sons before *Samuel*, that so you may the better see what that faithfulness is to which this Crown of life is promised. It is methinks clear to every eye, that the Duty both enjoyed and rewarded, is the holding fast of the Name and Truth of Christ, in the conscientious exercise of those gifts and graces which he hath entrusted us with for his glory, the opposites unto which are, in the Scripture dialect, *wavering, fainting, weariness in well-doing, backsliding, denying the faith*, and such like sins, which we find in it to be often both reprov'd and condemn'd. How smartly doth *Paul* chide the *Galatians* for their fickleness and inconstancy in the Doctrine of the Gospel? How severely doth Christ threaten the *Ashan* Churches declensions, and wainings in their profession? How frequent is he in his admonitions to them *to do their first works, to repent, to remember from whence they are fallen, to hold fast, that no man take their Crown*? What are all these expressions, but so many brief Commentaries to enlighten the Duty of faithfulness? I shall not therefore make use of the Lawyers Maxim, *Superflua non nocent*, that superfluous things oft-times do no harm, to insist any further in shewing what it is, but hasten rather to evince the necessity of it by considerations, which are *pondus & numero pares*, fully answerable in their weight to their number, and this is the task of the second *Query*.

1. Faith-

1. Faithfulness is necessary, in regard of that mutual and interchangeable trust which passeth between God and every Believer; God is not only their Depositary to keep what they commit to him, but they are also his, to preserve what he hath committed unto them; as they trust God with their souls, so God again trusts them with his Truth; both of them are things of an inestimable worth; one soul, if laid in the balance, weighs down a World; but Truth exceeds in value, Earth, Heaven, Saints, Angels, which must all perish and pass away, rather than the least *tota* of Truth: This double deposit *Paul* expressly mentions, and well nigh puts together; the one, in *2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day*: The other, in *ver. 14. That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost*. The heart of every Believer is the same to the Doctrines of Faith, and the Mysteries of the Gospel, that the *Ark*, and the *golden pot* were to the Tables of the Covenant, and the *Manna* in the time of the Law; it is the great repository into which God hath put those heavenly Treasures which were first hid in his bosom, and from hence conveyed into ours, to be both preserved and manifested to the glory of his grace: Now can any man rationally expect that God should keep his soul as the apple of the eye, because he professeth to have commended it unto him; and he not keep the sacred pledge of Faith which God hath deposited with him? Is it equal that Gods promises should stand valid to tie him to a performance, when the compact on mans part is wilfully broken or neglected? In Stipulations and Covenants between man and man, in which the terms and agreements are on each side alike, he that makes the first breach, dissolves the contract,

contract, and sets free the other party, how much more then may God, whose promises of salvation are conditional, without the least impeachment of his faithfulness, deny the fulfilling thereof to such as lightly esteem and set by the obligations that he hath put upon them? And that he thus will do, himself hath told us, *Hebr. 8. 9. They continued not in my Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord*: Let none therefore flatter themselves of obtaining a Crown of life and salvation, upon any cheaper rate than what God hath declared, the *holding fast* of their profession, the *keeping* the faith, the *fighting* the good fight; for were there as many Gates to Heaven, as there's stars shining in it, or Saints and Angels dwelling in it, yet they should all be shut against them, and they eternally be disappointed of their expectation, to go to it.

The second ground is drawn from the gifts and graces with which Believers are endowed, and obliged also to faithfulness in the use and exercise of them, in a double respect.

1. It is the *intent* of the *Donor*, that his gifts should be employed; he hath not given them any for *shew*, but for *use*. When the Lord, in the Parable, went into a far Country, he delivered to ten servants, ten pounds; but to all the same command, *Occupy till I come*, Luk. 19. 13. He fixeth no time of his return, but till then they must be trading: So 1 Cor. 12. 7. *The manifestations of the Spirit are given to profit withal*. The Original word, is *ad occupationem*, which denotes such a kind of profit, as redounds to a Community. *Dona sunt non ipsorum causa, sed Ecclesie*: They are given (saith *Gratius*) not for their sakes that possess them, but for the good of the Church; they have them,

as an estate, in trust, which is not his to whom it is made over, but anothers rather, for whose benefit he is to improve it. How much then must such Christians be without excuse, that have received Talents from God in sundry kinds, and yet have hid them in a *Naphin*, rather than put them into the *Bank*? How sad will be their account, when he that can neither deceive, nor be deceived, must make up the Audit? Think of this, O ye slothful ones, who are rich in knowledge and wisdom, but yet have no heart to instruct and teach others. Think of this, ye, upon whom wealth and treasure flowes in like a River, and yet have an hand as withered as *Jeroboams*, that cannot be stretched out to the least good. Think of this, ye who have golden opportunities to become skilful in the Word of righteousness, which is able to build up you, and others, to eternal life, and yet blaze away a great part of the lamp of your time in fruitless speculations.

2. The *nature* and *quality* of Gods gifts and graces, call for a faithful use and exercise of them, in regard of this peculiar property which they have in them, to *increase* by their *communication*; like the Widows oyle, that enriched her by its pouring of it out; like the loaves in the Gospel, that were multiplied by breaking; like Wells, that grow better by drawing; like Metals, that grow brighter by using; but when they are not *imparted*, they are *impaired*, when not employed, either *lessened* or *distinguished*. *Appian* tells a story of one *Geta*, who in the time of the Civil Wars in *Rome*, did wear a glass before one of his eyes, that so he might be unknown to them, who else haply would have endangered his life; but when he took it away, though his eye remained, yet the sight was lost, and the *Historian* makes the Reason to be, *visus est deperire*, for

for the long not using of it. Thus it is with the gifts and graces of God, they oft wither, and come to little or nothing, when they are not exercised. Now to what end hath God made them to be of such a nature and quality, differing from most other things, which grow lesser and weaker by communication? Is it not, that he might take away the pleas and excuses of men, which otherwise they would have for their not imparting of their gifts unto others? Who would teach and instruct another, if he should thereby have his knowledge diminished? Who would make another partaker of his wisdom, if himself thereby should stand the more in need of counsel? But here no such Arguments can be urged, but rather the contrary; the using of them for others good, is like the *Sareptians* feeding the Prophet, which makes the little Meal in the Barrel not to waste, and the Oyle in the Cruce not to fail, *1 Kings 17. 14.* Like the perfecting of habits, which are strengthened by the reiteration of acts, but lost by a neglect; let therefore such whom God hath made stewards of manifold gifts, consider how much they are engaged to faithfulness and diligence, when without any diminution of what they have, others are enriched; as the *seal* stamps the wax, as the *fire* heats the iron, or as the *Sun* enlightneth thousands of eyes; all without loss of *figure*, *heat*, or *light*; yea, when in so doing, themselves are advantaged, and have oft-times not an *hair*, but a *cubit* added to their spiritual stature.

A third ground to evince the necessity of fidelity, may be taken from the nearness and multiplicity of those Relations which are between God and every Believer. The Relations between one creature and another, as they are not so firm as those which are between God and a Belie-

ver, so neither are they so many: for all created beings which move and work in a narrow sphere, can never branch and spread themselves into numerous stems: Who ever heard, that the same person was a *spouse*, a *son*, a *servant*, a *subject*, a *steward*, a *witness*? And yet by all these ties do Believers stand related unto God: but that which makes them most deservedly remarkable, is not simply their *number*, but the *property* of faithfulness, which is the character that the Scripture hath stamped upon them all; and is so essential to the existence of every one of them in particular, as that without it they vanish and cease for to be. A *wife* must be faithful in all things, *1 Tim.* 3. 11. And without it, what is she but an Harlot, and one that forgets the Covenant of her God? *Children* must be faithful, *Tit.* 1. 6. else they are not their Fathers glory, but his shame and reproach. A *servant* must be faithful, *Math.* 24. 45. or else he cannot be reckoned among his Masters Treasures, but Burdens. A *subject* must be faithful, *Titus* 3. 1. else he becomes a Rebel, and passeth into the worst of Miscreants. A *steward*, it is required that he be found faithful, *1 Cor.* 4. 2. otherwise what is he, but a Thief, like *Judas*, who bare the Bag to enrich himself? A *witness* must be faithful, one who will not lie, *Prov.* 14. 5. or else he is (as *Salomon* saith) *2 Math.* 23. 34. *Sword, and a sharp Arrow;* *Prov.* 25. 18. Look then, O Christians, to your Relations, and tell me if faithfulness be not your Duty? Must you not lay down the name of Christians, or assume those things which make you so? Hath God betrothed you to himself in mercy, righteousness and truth, and may you break those golden bands, and be guiltless? *Hos.* 2. 19. Hath he made you sons by Adoption, joynt heirs with Christ, *Rom.* 8. 17. And may you

you be Prodigals, and leave your Fathers house? Hath he made you menial servants of his family and household, *Eph. 1. 10.* And may you be as those, *qui magis saecula vacant quam Deo*; who (as *Hierom* speaks) spend more time in the Worlds service, than in Gods? Hath he dignified you to be Rewards of the Oracles of God, *1. Pet. 3. 11* for to give his servants their appointed food, and may you starve them by neglect, or poyson them with Error? Hath he chosen you to be his Witnesses, *1. Cor. 14. 31.* and will you be bribed to withhold your Testimony for God? Or that my words were as sharp *goads* to prick and put forward the slothful; as a shrill *Trumpet* to awaken the secure; as an heavenly *Eagle* to strengthen the hands of those that mind faithfulness in their Profession; that so the Gospel might be adorned by all, and Believers so walk, *Ut de illis nemo loquatur passim sine mendacio*; That none (according to *Hieroms* counsel) might be able to speak evil of them without lying; surely there is no better way to do it, than by considering the various Relations you stand in to God, which on his part they put marks of honour upon you; so on your part they challenge service and duty to be returned to him with faithfulness.

A fourth ground, is from the great deformity which appears in the waverings, and inconstancy of such who change, who question, who let go the profession of the Faith which they should hold fast, as I shall shew in several particulars.

In Scripture it is called an *haling*, *1. Kings 18. 21.* *How long halting between two opinions?* As *Esaias* his question on to the *Israhelites*, who walked in their Religion after the manner of lame persons, that go one step down, and another up; one while for *Baal*, and another while for God.

In

In other places it hath the reproach of *follies* set upon it, *Hos. 7. 11* Ephraim is like a *filly Dove without heart*: To want *gall* as a Dove is commendable; but to want *heart* and understanding, so as to be made a prey to every seducer, is a brand of infamy. Paul resembles it to *childishness*, which is an infected estate wherein fancy rules, and not reason: *Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine*, Ephes. 4. 14. To be a man in *years*, and a child in *stature* is reputed monstrous; but it is far more to be a *man* in stature, and a *child* in understanding. How opposite is such a condition to faith, which is not *unstable*, a faint *supposition* of *ifs* and *ands*; but *unmovable*, a firm and sure ground that giveth a subsistence to the things that are hoped for: yea, how contrary is it to God, whose glory it is, to be *the same to day, yesterday, and for ever*? Heb. 13. 8 *Who is infinite in understanding*, Psal. 147. 5. *Who is faithful in what he hath promised*. Will he who is unchangeable, delight in professions of righteousness, which are like a morning dew? will he who is only wise, be pleased in the sacrifice of fools? or will he whose promises are Truth, take pleasure in double-minded persons, who are unstable in all their ways?

Inconstancy and change, it is the guise of Hereticks; who are alwayes affecting Novelties, not only in words, but in Doctrines. *Pelagius*, as *Austin* reports, did several times alter his opinion; and the *Arrians* had, as *Hilary* calleth it, *Mensuram & annuam fidem*, every month or year a new faith: Such do, as those that paint their faces, who are often laying on new complexion, else the defects which they strive to hide, would soon appear: But how uncomely this is for those that profess the faith of

Christ,

Christ, which hath alwayes continued as truly one, as the Sun in the Firmament, (notwithstanding any *parelia* that might make weak persons sometimes to conceive otherwise) we may see by the chief of the *Apostles*, who to free himself from the least umbrage or shew of levity, doth first expostulate with the *Corinthians*, Did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that wish me there should be yea, yes, and nay, may? And then solemnly protests, As God is true, our mind towards you, was not yea and nay, 2 Cor. i. 17, 18. Surely inconsistency, in what Subject soever it is, casts a dark shadow; but the more eminent the gifts and abilities of any person are, the more remarkable is the blemish that comes by it: Who doth not account the late *Grotius* among the first-born of the learned, in regard of his profound and various knowledge? and yet like *Reuben*, he lost the double portion of honour and respect that was due unto him, through that instability which was observed in him. Hence *Rivet* relates this story of him in his Book against him, That when he was a prisoner in his own Countrey, *Prince Maurice* being interceded with for his liberty, denied the granting of it, and pointing to the weather-cock upon his house, said, *En Grati Caput*; Behold there *Grotius* his head. I speak not this to load the person, but the crime; and to shew that a Christian should not be as a *Reed* in the *Wind*, but as a *Rock* in the *Sea*, which amidst all dashings of the waves, stands immoveable.

3. Unsteadfastness is vile in Gods sight, and carries more of a provocation in it, than many other sins, as may appear by the wrath which it kindles in his breast, and the judgments which he inflicts: How severely did God recompence this sin upon *Israel*, who, *Psal.* 78. 59. *Had dealt*

dealt unfaithfully like their fathers and were turned aside like a broken Bow: In the next verse it is said, He greatly abhorred Israel, he forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into his enemies hand. So again, God denounceth a death upon offenders in this kind, which is made dreadful both by the hand which inflicts it; and by the shame and reproach that attends it: *The men that have transgressed my Covenant, which have not performed the words of the Covenant, which they made before me, &c. I will give them into the hand of them that seek their life, and their dead bodies shall be meat unto the Fowles of the Heaven, and to the Beasts of the Earth, Jer. 34. 18, 20.* If then we may take the magnitude and dimensions of a sin, by the punishment which God doth proportion and meet forth unto it, as questionless we may, because God in all his judgments aims at the clearing of his justice to the creature, and that he doth not without a cause, do any thing that he hath done: We may conclude that unsteadfastness and falseness of heart in the matters of God, is a sin, *magna infamia & reatus*, of great infamy and guilt, leaving in the very punishment and indelible stain and blot upon the memory of the offender.

A fifth ground to evince the necessity of faithfulness, is from the transactions and carriage of the great and last day, in which every man must give an account for himself to God, Rom. 14. 12. Then the sentence passeth not according to the greatness of place, or measure of gifts, but according to fidelity. It is not said, well done, rich, learned, or wise, but faithful servant: He only it is, who in the sight of men and Angels, is first commended, and then bountifully rewarded, *Enter thou into thy Masters joy, Mat. 25. 21.* As riches profit not in the day of wrath, so nei-
ther

ther wisdom nor learning. If then God should ask the Apostles question, 1 Cor. 1. 20. *Where is the Scribe? where is the wise? where is the Disputer of this World?* How silent and amazed would all stand! Alas! it is not *videtur quod sic, probatur quod non*, which will then stand any man instead: that day is not a time of arguing, or of pleadings, but of sentence, in which, as the faithful servant is rewarded, so the unfaithful is condemned. First, he is openly reproached, *Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have put my money to the Exchangers, &c.* Matth. 25. ver. 26, 27. and then finally judged, *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* ver. 30. O therefore, if ever you would lie down comfortably in your Grave, and lift up your heads joyfully when you shall arise out of it, be perswaded to practise this Duty of fidelity, which hath been discovered to be of such absolute importance, for the obtaining of eternal blessedness, as that if any shall still be regardless of it, what can we say, but as *Lactantius* once spake, *Qui in vitiis sibi placent, nobis non credent, etiam si solem manibus gestemus.* Such who indulge themselves in their sins, will not believe us, though we carry the Sun in our hands; and so I pass to the third *Query*, which is to shew, why faithfulness must be persisted in unto death, and of this there are sundry grounds.

I. That our fidelity to Christ might parallel and answer the fidelity of Christ unto us. *Ibi in Christiane fidei cursus profectusque metam, ubi Christus posuit suam.* Do thou, O Christian (saith *Bernard*) there fix the bounds of thy Race and Progress, where Christ set his. He fainted not, nor was dismayed, untill he became, not only the *Author*, but the *Finisher* of our salvation. It was his love

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that held him upon the Cross, when death could not hold him in the Grave, though provoked by his enemies to come down that they might believe; but what would have become of our expected blessedness by him, if he had not conflicted with *shame* and *pain*, untill it terminated in death? Would it not have been as a foundation and building without a top-stone, to which none could have joyfully shouted grace, grace? And yet, what bitter contradiction of sinners did he endure, in his effecting reconciliation for sinners? In his *Person*, denied to be the *Son of God*; in his *Office*, denied to be the *Messias*; in his *Doctrine*, proclaimed to the people as a *Deceiver*; in his *Miracles*, reproached as a *Conjurer*; in his *Life*, slandered as a *Glutton* and *Wine-bibber*; in his *Death*, reputed the worst of *Malefactors*. What could men or Devils have done more, to have made him to sink under the weight of his burden? Is it not meet then, that we in *Salvians* phrase should be, *Tam ingentis exempli parvi imitatores*, in some weak measure followers of so grand an example. If he loved us to the end, *John* 13. 1. is it not fit that we should take up *Dauid's* resolution, to keep his statutes to the end? *Psal.* 119. 33. If he became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, *Phil.* 2. 8. Should we not say, as *Paul*, *That we are ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus*? *Acts* 21. 13. Certainly if we could repeat such a bloody sacrifice a thousand times over, his love might challenge it from us, if we do but thoroughly weigh his *innocency*, and our *guilt*; his *worth*, and our *wilfulness*.

2. The promise of reward is made only to perseverance, and that not by any secret and tacit condition implied, but in open and express terms: *He that shall endure to the end, the*

the same shall be saved, *Matth. 24. 13.* So again, *Luk. 22. 28, 29.* *Ye ones they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that you may eat and drink at my Table.* This promise of a Kingdom, and of a Table in Heaven, it is not to those that heard him, or to those that followed him, saith St. *Chrysostom*, but to them that continued with him. The same thing speaks the Apostle, who had well learned his Masters Doctrine, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive a Crown of life.* *Jam. 1. 12.* The Crown is not set at the beginning of the Race, that men should run from it, nor in the middle, that they should run beyond it; but at the end, that all might run to it. And in this sense the Apostle encourageth *Timothy* to lay hold of eternal life, *1 Tim. 6. 12.* alluding to those, who in pursuing the prize, when they come near the Goal, stretch forth their hands to take hold of it. It is not by a sudden snatching at it, which a stander by may do and yet have no right unto it; but it is by striving lawfully, without which no man can be crowned. O, how should this startle *sluggish* and *slow* Christians, whose goodness is soon scorched and dried up, and yet please themselves with hopes of eternal happiness! But if Religion were only a *Paroxysm*, or a few saint *mistakes*, who so wicked, but that he might be deemed a Christian? *Balaam* must be put in the Kalendar of Saints, and *Jehu* be ranked among the best of Kings. O that such would conscientiously remember that there are no promises that speak the least comfort to them; but there are threatenings that may turn their confidence into an amazement: What saith God, *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him?* *Hebr. 10. 38.* Nay, it will go worse with them, than if they had

never begun; *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment,* 2 Pet. 2. 21. What can be spoken more to shew the sad end of such as begin in the Spirit, but end in the flesh; or to evince the absolute necessity of faithfulness to the utmost period that it can be extended unto? And yet if this be not enough, consider,

3. That persevering in faithfulness is the great discriminating character between a true Believer, and a formal Professor; between one whose heart is dyed in grain with a deep tincture of godliness, and him that is only *dealbat in nomine Christiani*, whitened superficially over with the name of a Christian, as *Austin* expresseth it. In their egress or setting out, they both seem to be alike affected in their hope, joy, zeal, and resolution; but in their progress and continuance, the difference is as great, as between a *Star*, and a *Comet*; between a *Spring*, and a *Torrent*; or between a *Reed*, and a *Cedar*. The Hypocrites *hope*, is like the web or house of the Spider, which every Besom can easily destroy; his *joy*, is as the *singing* and chirping of the Grasshopper, which ends with the Summer; his *zeal*, like *flushings* in the face, which go and come; like *breath* on steel, as soon off, as on; his *resolutions*, like small *trenches*, which any foot can both step over, and tread down. But the Believers *hope*, is like an *Anchor*, that is sure and steadfast; his *joy*, is like the *solace* of the *Bar*, which feeds upon honey and sweetness in the sharpest winter; his *zeal*, is like the *fire* of the Sanctuary, which never goes out; his *resolutions* are like a *Base of steel*, which is not easily broken. Now tell me, Brethren, would you willingly be numbered among those, who begin in the Spirit, but end in

the flesh? would you be at once reproached by your consciences, and condemned by God, as mockers of God, Hypocrites, Deceivers of your own souls? would you want the blessed testimony in your own breast of your integrity in spiritual and holy services? If not, then keep up your faithfulness, and make it not the work only of a day, or some small remnant of your time, but of your whole life, for else you can never say with dying *Hezekiah*, Remember me, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight, Isa. 37. 3.

4. It is requisite that Christian fidelity hold out to the last, and terminate only with life and being, in regard that God who promiseth, is eternal; and the Reward also promised, is everlasting.

First, God is eternal, He inhabiteth eternity, Isa. 57. 15. He only hath immortality, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Now what communion can eternity have with a desultory levity, which is every moment some other thing than what it was? But constancy and perseverance (as Bernard saith) *præsefers imaginem eternitatis*; it carries upon it an image and resemblance of eternity, because it is opposite unto levity and change, which are utterly repugnant unto eternity; and because also it doth imply, that if the line of being were drawn out unto millions of Ages; it also would run parallel to it; and be co-extended with it; for should it in the least measure fall short of a Christians being, it could not be called perseverance, but apostacy; and thereby he should lose the prize, which is given only to him that holds out to the end.

Secondly, The Reward promised, is everlasting, it is eternal life, an inheritance incorruptible, a Kingdom that cannot

not be shaken. Now is it meet, that he who takes Religion as a *Farm*, and not as a *Freehold*, who will be a Tenant at his own will, and not at his Lords, who intends to hold is no longer than himself pleaseth, and throw up all, when he listeth, that he should be made partaker of the same blessedness with them, *who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, Rom. 2. 7.* What advantage then had *David*, by choosing Gods statutes as his inheritance? *Psal. 119. 111.* What the better should he be, who is willing to buy the Truth at any rate, but to sell it at no rate? *Prov. 23. 23.* If such who make the World their *freehold*, and take only a *lease* of Gospel-profession for their own accommodations, should be as sure of Heaven at the last, as the most diligent and persevering Believer? But let no *temporaries*, whose faith and love are but for a time, deceive themselves with such vain hopes. Heaven and endless glory, are not such commodities that God will put off at such easie terms; it is a Kingdom that is *parapetatum*, but yet is *rapendum*; it is prepared from eternity, but yet must be taken by violence, and holding to the end, that so in the end we may enjoy life and glory without end.

I have now finished what I propounded for the explication of this great Duty of Christian constancy and fidelity, in dispatching these three *Queries*, which shew what it is, why absolutely necessary; and why to be persisted in unto death; in which I fear I have dwelt so long, as to prejudice those fruitful applications, which like the sacrifices of the Law, should be entire, and untainted in so part, in regard of their special usefulness, but I must through straits of time be enforced to contract both their length and number.

1. Then, let me exhort you to make that your Duty which *Epaphras* made his earnest prayer for the *Colossians*. That they might stand perfect, and compleat in all the will of God, *Colos. 4. 12.* Three eminent blessings are comprized in this pithy Petition; a true and perfect knowledge of the will of God, a sincere and full obedience unto it, and a firm perseverance in both, as that which sets the Crown upon each of the others head. Knowledge, is in order to practice and obedience, as the sculpture in the Seal is made in respect to the stamping of the wax; and an happy conjunction it is where these two meet; but yet no man is made compleat and perfect thereby, unless he stand fast, and continue therein unto the end. Whatsoever therefore measure of gifts any of you are arrived unto, or are enriched with from God, be perswaded to continue with all fidelity in the doing of his will, that so you may like the good servants in the Gospel, both give up a joyful account, and receive a blessed reward. But because in *Quintilians* elegant comparison, men are as Bottles, which are more readily and better filled, by taking them in hand one by one, and pouring water into them; than by setting them together, and casting water upon them: Give me leave to make my application particularly, according to those distinct capacities in which you stand, and to speak unto you, as *Ministers*, as *Christians*, that so I may the more effectually press this Duty upon you.

First, You who are Ministers, Guides and Leaders of the people of God, who sound the silver Trumpet of the Gospel, as the Priests under the Law did theirs, to animate Believers to fight the good fight, and to keep the faith; take heed that levity and inconstancy be not found in your Doctrine, or in your Example, which like a root of bitterness,

ness, will quickly spread to the defiling of many. If you deliver sometimes one thing as the undoubted truth of God, and another time, what is flatly contrary unto it, will not this breed *Atheism*, rather than *Religion*? and make you, who build again the things you once destroyed, to be *Transgressors*, Gal. 2. 28. Is not this the way to bring reproach upon your persons, that *Demetrius* like, ye make rather a trade and craft of your profession, than any conscience to God, by whom you are betruſted? Is not this to be a stumbling block to the weak, and to overthrow their faith, whom you should strengthen? Is not this to proclaim to the World, that you care not what becomes of those souls for whom Christ dyed, and for whom you must give an account? It is not a small sin in any, but in you it is a signal crime; it is as a spot in an *Ephod*, as a crack in the golden *Bells* of *Aaron*, as impure oyle in the lamp of the Sanctuary. O therefore let not Christ, for whom you ought to suffer reproach, be reproached by you! He can make up all your sufferings, by turning your *Thorns* into *Crowns*, your *shame* into *glory*, but what recompence can you make to him, for the injuries done by you to him, and his Truth? If you should unsay all again, who would believe you? If you should throw down your self at the Threshold of the Church, and bid them trample upon you as unsavoury salt, how few will either spare you, or pity you? If you do recover the lost peace of your conscience, yet how hardly will you regain your name? If *Simon* be once a *Lep*er, the name will stick by him when the disease hath left him. Though he shew himself to the Priest, and be pronounced clean, though it be known to all that he is as free of it as themselves, yet he is like to carry the name of *Simon the Lep*er with him to his grave, *Matth.* 23. 6. Enemies

mies who watch for your haltings, if they have nothing at present that they can charge upon you, are apt upon all occasions to reproach you with former failings. Let us then Brethren, practice faithfulness, as well as preach it, and keep the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, that so we may approve our selves to be the servants of Christ; and such as seek not worldly advantages, but to save both our selves and others.

Secondly, You who are Christians, As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as you have been taught, Col. 2. 6, 7. Be not *Scepticks* in Religion, so as to hold nothing at all, which is utterly repugnant unto faith: *Tolle assertiones, & Christianismum sustulisti*: Take away (saith Luther) principles to be asserted, and you destroy Christianity; neither be you *Changlings* in your faith; Christians only upon the light grounds of fancy, but upon the sure grounds of knowledge and evidence; understand what you believe, and then cleave unto it, as *Dauids* soul did unto *Jonathan*. O it is the glory of Christians, to keep that good thing which is committed unto them, so as not to have it won from them by flatteries, or extorted from them by threatnings, or to be disputed out of it by Sophisms. And here, how might I take up a complaint, that this Crown of glory is fallen from our head, where multitudes of Professors have made such defections from the Truth, as former Ages cannot parallel! What Article of the faith hath not openly been questioned, but peremptorily denied? What monstrous births have been cryed up, as the genuine off-spring of Gospel-light, when Satan, without transforming himself into any such likeness, hath been the Parent of them? I shall not offend sober ears in

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mentioning the blasphemies that some have uttered, but exhort you in the words of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 3. 17. *Ye therefore Beloved, seeing you know these before, beware, lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness;* which, that you may the better keep and preserve, I shall briefly suggest some directions that may be useful to effect it, and some Arguments that may persuade you to the practice of it.

1. If you would be faithful to Christ, be sincere in your profession of him, make *David's* prayer and desire to be yours: *Let my heart be found in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed,* Psa. 110. 80. Religion which is begun in Hypocrisie, will certainly end in Apostasy, which alwayes carries with it reproach and ignominy. The spring oft-times of a feigned profession promiseth much, having in it a verdure and beauty that is fair to the eye, but yet suddenly withereth for want of a root to feed it; who would not have expected an Harvest from the stony ground, where the seed sown came up so quickly? but yet that which was the cause of its hasty growth, was the cause also of its defection, it came up soon, *because it had no depth of earth*, and it withered also away for the want of it. I have read a story of two Kings, the one *Matthias* King of Hungary, the other, *George*, King of Bohemia, That upon difference in a point of Religion, did commence a War that lasted ten years, and then at length came to this strange agreement, That their two fools should determine the controversie by fifty-cuffs; who would ever have thought that the beginning of such an hot contention, could have had such an issue? By the War, great was the zeal which was pretended to Truth and Religion; but the end shewed how little they valued it, for rather, how much they scorned

scorned it: And such will alwayes be the issue: what those make, who take up spiritual duties upon fleshly principles. *Do I (saith Paul) purpose according to the flesh, that wish me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?* 2 Cor. 1. 17. If therefore you would persevere to the end, let your aims be purely spiritual, and without any mixture of carnal designs; not making God the *object* of your worship, and your selves the *end*, but him both.

2. If you would hold out to the end, keep firm your union and communion with Christ, who is the Fountain of all a Christians abilities; in him we can do every thing, *Philip. 4. 13.* without him nothing, *John 15. 6.* Constancy and fidelity is not *art*, but *don*; not a *moral habit* acquired by industry, but a divine gift and grace communicated unto Believers by Christ, from whom there is a continual efflux of life and power. A straw is not the stronger by lying upon a Rock, because the strength of the Rock is *inherent* in its self, and not *transient*; it is a *dead*, and not a *living* Rock: But Christ, as he hath life and strength in himself, so hath he both for Believers: When therefore you find or feel any aguish fits of inconstancy creeping upon you, whereby your faith is shaken, and your love waxeth cold; have recourse then forthwith to Christ, and touch him by the hand of faith, and vertue will go forth from him to heal you, as it did the woman with the bloody issue, who no sooner touch'd the hem of his garment, but she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague, *Mark 5. 29.*

3. Arm your selves with *courage* and *patience*, both to do, and to suffer whatsoever you may be called unto: Both the branches of Fortitude are necessary for a Soldier, and they are no less useful for a Christian, who must

have a *buck of patience* to endure all, all hardness, as well as an *edge of valour* to set upon all difficulties, and to go through all dangers, not shrinking at death it self. Those many colours that the *Camelion* turns it self into, *Aristotle* ascribes to extream fear, which, how true it is, I will not dispute; but certain it is, That pusillanimity in a Christian, is the great cause of all that inconstancy which is found in them: Did they fear God much, they would fear men very little; the true fear of him, would swallow up all the vain fears of men, as *Moses* his Rod, did the Rods of the Magicians. What made some in the Primitive Times, who were called *Libellatici*, to sign the denial of their faith with their own hand, but fear? What made others, who were named *Traditores*, to deliver up the Scriptures into their enemies hand, as a token of their renouncing of them, but fear? What caused others, who were stiled *Thursificantes*, to throw incense into the fire, that they might redeem their lives by such homage performed to the Idols, but fear? Let therefore courage animated by faith take place in you, and you will readily overcome both frowns and flatteries, saying, as that noble Martyr in *Basil*, *They can threaten me with no worse thing than Hell; nor promise me any better thing than Heaven.*

4. Make use of the examples of the Prophets and Saints of God, according to the counsel of the Apostle, *James* 5. 16. who have fulfilled the commands of Christ with an undaunted courage, and born the Cross of Christ with an invincible patience: Examples are oftentimes made use of, as pleas, to justify the doing of evil, and have also a mortal influence to draw and win others to practice the like sin. *Paul* attributes to *Peters* dissimulation, a power of cogency, in making others to do as he did:

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Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Gal. 2. 14. May they not then be improved, as effectual helps, in strengthening the hands of others in well-doing, while they behold the courage and constancy of many, who have trodden the same paths before them? Do we not read of some, who for Christs Name have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods? *Hebr. 10. 34.* Of others, *Who esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the Treasures of Egypt?* as Moses did; *Hebr. 11. 26.* Of others again, *Who were tortured, not accepting of deliverance!* *Hebr. 11. 35.* Have we not read of others, who have kissed their chains, who have embraced the stake at which they were to suffer? Now have not we the same cause to bear witness unto with them? Have not we the same recompence of reward to encourage us, which they had? Have not we the same God and Saviour to honour, and to love? Did he not suffer as much for us, as for them? Why then should not we endeavour to follow them in their steps, and hold fast our confidence unto the end? They have shewed us that poverty, reproaches, sufferings, bonds, and death it self, which have a ghastly aspect to the eye of the World, are no such evils, but that a Believer may rejoyce in them, and triumph over them; let us therefore, that we be neither wearied, nor faint in our minds, set before us the Armies of Saints and Martyrs, that in all Ages, by faith and patience have inherited the promises.

I shall now make no other supplement to this Application, of persevering in your fidelity to God, to which you have been both exhorted and directed; but only a brief addition of two or three Arguments that may perswade to it, as the *Coronis* of the whole.

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First, God will kindly take, and faithfully remember your constant adherence to him, and to his Truth; all that you have done, or suffered for him, shall be registred in his Book, *Malachi* 3. 16. All your tears that you have shed before him, shall be put into his Bottle, *Psal.* 56. 8. Yea, those things that you have forgotten, the Lord will remind, *Mat.* 25. 44. The Saints did not remember the kindnesses that they had done to Christ, but he tells them how, and when they did it. The sins of *Judah* which are written with a pen of Iron, and with the point of a Diamond, *Ier.* 17. 1. are not so firmly written, as your services to God; they are graven upon the Tables of their hearts, but you, and your works, are writ in his breast; well might the Apostle say, *God is not unrighteous, that he should forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed to his Name*, *Hebr.* 6. 10. Who then would not serve faithfully such a God, who forgets none of our services, and remembers none of our sins, *Ier.* 31. 14.

The second Argument, is that of the Apostle, *1 Cor.* 15. 58. *Be ye steadfast, immovable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* As he exactly records all you do, so he will abundantly recompence every Duty and Act of obedience done by you. A cup of cold water given to a Disciple, which costs nothing, unless it be the drawing of it out of the Well, or the taking it up out of the Spring, shall not want its reward, *Matth.* 10. 42. If such mean works be regarded, never question the greater; go into the Vineyard, and labour, but ask not what shall be thy wages; it is enough God hath said, your labour shall not be in vain; and yet if you would know, who can tell you? Doth not the Scripture say, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,*
neither

neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. 2. 9. But yet if a weak and imperfect glimpse of what is laid up for you, and shall certainly be given to you, would add any strength unto your hands, or make you like *Jacob*, who after his vision, went chearfully on his journey, *Gen. 29. 1.* Harken a little to what I shall in a lisping and stammering way declare, You shall have God himself to be your Reward, who is infinite in power, and can remove all things that may hurt or offend, infinite in bounty, and can give all things that may delight or satisfie; infinite in continuance, and can, and will perpetuate your blessedness to Eternity, in the fruition of himself; *cum quo solo, & de quo solo, & in quo solo anima intellectualis vere beata est*; with whom only, and in whom only, and through whom only the understanding soul of man findeth, and everlastingly enjoyeth; as *Austin* pithily expresseth it in his Confessions.

The third Argument to prevail upon you, is, That you serve the Lord Christ, with whom there is no respect of persons, *Coloss. 3. 25.* It is *Ambrose* his observation, and others of the Ancients also, that the Holy Ghost hath purposely placed *Lazarus*, that was so poor, in the bosome of *Abraham* that was so rich, *Luk. 16. 22.* To teach us, that rich and poor, if found faithful in the Kingdom of Grace, have an equal interest in the Kingdom of Glory. Do not think, that because your estate is low, your parts weak, your Talents few, that therefore God will not regard your person, or accept of your services, as he will of others, who have a greater measure of gifts and abilities: That which God eyes, and that which he crowns in his servants, is Truth and Fidelity; the gifts are his, but the improvement

ment is yours ; and if you shew the same diligence that others do, and hold out unto the end, your reward will be as certain, if not as great as theirs, and your acceptance will be as much. The sacrifice of a pair of Turtles in the Law, was a sweet savour unto the Lord, as well as the Bullock, *Levit. 1. 17.*

A second Application that flows from this Duty of persevering faithful unto the death, is, the refusing of that fond dotage of the *Priscillianists*, who anciently taught, That they might say, or deny, swear, or forswear, so that they did but adhere to the Truth with their hearts: An opinion it is, which in difficult and doubtful times, will obtain haply its end, to save the skin from danger, but will certainly destroy the soul ; it makes Religion only a *Pleasure-boat*, in which a man may put forth to Sea in a fair and calm season, but if any gusts or stormy weather should arise, may again forthwith betake himself to the shoar, and not unnecessarily hazard either his person or Vessel : But how many pieces of the Christian Armour doth this effeminate Doctrine make useles? What need the loyns to be girt about with Truth, as opposite either to *Error* or *Hypocrisie*, when the lips and heart may be so differing? Why should any man put on the breast-plate of righteousness in an holy Conversation, if an external compliance with the worst of vanities, will stand him in better stead? What cumber and royle must it be for a Believer to take to himself the Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of salvation, & to have his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, if he never need to fight a stroak, or to make any resistance? What need *Peter* to have wept bitterly, when he denied his Master, as long as his heart and affection were still towards him? O how unwise were
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the Martyrs, prodigally to shed their blood, to expose themselves to the teeth of Beasts, to the flames of fires, to Racks, to sharp Stakes and Precipices, when they might have gone such an easie and fair way to Heaven? *Euripides* the Tragedian (as *Aristotle* reports) was questioned for his life, for uttering this Verse in his *Hippolytus*,

ἡ γλῶσσά μ' ἀνέμωχ', ἡ δὲ φρεὶν ἀνέμωχ'.

Furata lingua est, animus injuratus est,

The tongue is sworn, but the mind is unsworn; and the Title of the Accusation was, That he taught the people to forswear and perjure themselves. What then do such men deserve to suffer, who, to save a little trouble to the flesh, durst invent such execrable blasphemies, that carry a repugnancy to the light of nature, and put Christians upon the doing of that, which men that have not rased out all the characters and impressions of conscience, cannot but detest and abhor? I should not have mentioned this old heresie, had it slept quietly in his Grave; but that there are yet some specters and walking images of it, found in the principles and practices of many, who can go to Mass for the Musick sake, and sit bare out of civility, because others are uncover'd, and all the while reserve their faith entire unto themselves; but if such fig-leaves can hide their nakedness, that themselves behold it not, yet surely God will find it out, and ask them what is become of that glorious robe of faith and profession with which they were once clothed? Let not those then who are followers of Christ,

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and would be owned by him as such in the great day, suffer themselves so to be deluded by the arts or practices of any, as to conceive, that they may cleave to his Truth with their hearts, and yet dissemble it, yea, gain-say it with their mouths. Hath a Christian more latitude in this respect, than any other Religion whatever? Do not all people walk every one in the Name of his God? Micah 4. 5. And may a Christian walk in the name of any god? May he as freely bow in the Temple of Rimmon, as in the Temple of Christ, and yet be only the servant of Christ? What mean then those Scriptures, *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers?* for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. So again, *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing, go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord,* 1a. 92. 11. Surely these commands of God, must be as vacated and repealed Statutes, or else they will one day stand as evidences against those, who presume to take a liberty which God hath not allowed, in being present at Idolatrous Assemblies; and then think they can readily clear themselves from guilt, by telling others, that though they were present in body, they were absent in spirit, not owning in the least that with their hearts, to which they seemed to yield an outward compliance. But such shifts, which are more thin than a Cobweb, are no better than the handkerchief of the adulterous woman, with which, when she hath eaten, she wipeth her mouth, and saith, *I have done no wickedness.* Prov. 30. 20. *And how shall we know who are the hypocrites?* I

219 I have now finished what I purposed to speak concerning the *Duty* enjoined, *Be thou faithful unto death*; that which remains, is the promise annexed, *And I will give thee a Crown of life*. And is it not pity, that through straits of time they should be separated in the Sermon, which are coupled together in the Text? It might haply put an edge upon your affections, and excite you to a greater measure of diligence, to hear the bounty of Christ unfolded, who makes all his servants to be no less than *sons* for love, *heirs* for birth-right, and crowned *Kings* for dignity; and yet when I assay to do it, I am, methinks, as a man standing upon a Rock, and fathoming a deep and bottomless Sea, who after he hath let fall his sounding lead, forthwith calls for more line, and when a second and third addition is made, still calls, *more line, more line*, and at last falls from sounding, to admiring its unsearchable depth. And so must I, after I have uttered all the conceptions that men and Angels can furnish me with to express the riches of Christ's love, call still for more, and then end in astonishment, and say with the Apostle, *O the riches of God!* yet if you will see somewhat of it, I shall in a few particulars shew you his bounty, by comparing it with those services which he crowns.

1. The reward promised, is perfect blessedness; it is *life* that cannot end in death; it is not like *Adams* in innocency, who was left free to stand, or to fall; it is a *Crown* without and above a *Cross*; it is a *Canaan*, not flowing with milk, but with rivers of joy and pleasure, which are free from mixture that may debase, and from vanity, which may make them nauseous. But alas! how imper-

fect are all our services which are thus rewarded? when laid in the balance, they are found too light; when tryed by the touch-stone, they are of a course alloy. If Gospel sincerity did not stand for legal perfection, if endeavours and desires did not pass for performances, what would become of the best of Saints? Is it then not matter of just wonder, that such services which the Law would not forgive, Christ should reward? If they were perfect, they were but our Duty, and could not deserve the least degree of glory; no more than a glow-worm for its shining, could challenge to be turned into a star, and yet now when spotted, they are crowned with life.

2. The reward promised, is a manifold good: In the Proposition it appears as some one particular thing, but in the enjoyment it is eminently a manifold, yea, an infinite good, and comprehends blessings more for number, as well as greater for worth, than the heart of man could wish to it self, if it should spend an eternity in nothing else. What is it that a Crown of life doth not take in, and encircle within its compass? It contains all the thoughts of God from everlasting to make his chosen happy; it includes all the good which Christ by his blood and death hath purchased, and which the Spirit by his Office is to apply, and to assure us of: But how small is the number of our services, when our Omissions exceed our Duties, when our ignorance of Gods will is more than our knowledge, and our backwardness to do it more than our diligence: We cannot say of our acts of obedience, as *David* speaks of the thoughts of Gods love unto us, *How great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.* Psal.

Pfal, 139. 17, 18. Alas ! if our prayers, tears, fastings, alms, mortifications of sin, acts of worship, were all summed up, their number would be, like the few Trees of a Forrest, which a child may write, *Isa.* 10. 19. like two or three Berries in the top of the uttermost Bough of the Olive-Tree, and four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, *Isa.* 17. 6. like a thin Harvest, which fills not the arm of the Reaper, much less the threshing-floor : Is it not then riches of mercy, which rewards such persons, whose sins are numberless, and whose duties are few ?

3. The promised reward is an endless good : Our *work* hath an end, but our *wages* hath no end ; the seed-time in which we sowe is short, but the harvest which we reap is eternal : We are faithful only to death, but we are blessed for ever, if we lived as many years as *Methuselah* lived dayes, yea, as the World hath stood minutes, in an exact and perfect doing of the will of God, we could never justly have asked, that our recompence should be eternal : And yet, what no creature could ever plead, Christ hath freely given unto us, for a few years, shall I say, or a few dayes service ? Oh how willingly would I expatiate my self in this pleasing Theme to make you and my self sensible of this transcendent goodness and bounty of Christ, who rewards services, which are for their nature imperfect, for their number few, and for their continuance short, with a Crown of endless glory : But I must break off, and leave you to admire.

I come now (as it will be expected) to speak of our
Reverend

Reverend Brother, and servant of Christ, whose death hath occasioned this sad meeting; and I could have wished, that this task might have been managed by some more able hand, he being a Subject meet to exercise, both the tongue and pen of a skilful Workman: And yet what need I to make such a wish? when he was never ambitious of a *Panegyrick*, being far more desirous to *do well*, than to *hear well*; and to have his works to praise him in the *Gale*, than an Orator in the *Desk*; and to live rather in the *hearts* of men, than in their *mouths*: A Crown of breath is a poor and low end for any man to design to himself; in what he doth; but far more in a Minister, whose aim should be heavenly, as well as his work: I shall not therefore make it my drift, so much to commend him, as to recommend to you some things which were observable in him, so as to make him a real pattern to us all for our imitation.

I. He was exemplary in faithfulness: I may say of him, as the Apostle doth of *Gaius*, the second Epistle of *John*, ver. 9. *Thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost*; as a friend he was faithful in his love, being such a friend (as *Solomon* saith) *loves for ever*, Prov. 10. 17. As a Minister, he was faithful and persevering in the Truth; his Doctrine was not yea and nay, but in Christ yea; and in his *faithfulness*, he more than once professed, that he was so fully persuaded of those Gospel Truths which he had both preached and practised, as that he should willingly live and dye in the acknowledgment of them. As an Husband and Parent he was faithful, being careful about their welfare, but not unfaithful. As a Subject he was faithful to This Prince,

Prince, and was upon that account a Sufferer as well as others, because he would neither *mingle nor meddle* with those who were given to change, but did fear God and the King.

2. He was exemplary in his diligence in the work of his Ministry; in which, I think, he exceeded many, but fell short of none; his work was pleasing to him, and he had much rather *sweat in the Vineyard, than stand idle in the Market place*; the constant labour and pains which he did therein undergo, were such, as were beyond his strength, and laid the foundation of those distempers which did first break, and then ruine that firm habitude of body, which he seemed to have above many of his Brethren.

3. He was exemplary in an holy and blameless Conversation: It is the saying of one, That if any men were born without *original sin*, they should be *Ministers*; if any could live without *actual sin*, they should be *Ministers*; if there were any *venial sin*, it should not be in *Ministers*; so exceedingly is purity requisite to that Office: I do not speak this, as if I would thereby exempt him from any infirmities of the flesh, which the best of Saints do both find and feel: But yet I cannot but tell you, what I had from himself, That it was above thirty years since it pleased God to bring him to the sight of his sins, and his need of a Saviour, and to bow his heart to the obedience of his will, and that since that time (through the grace of God) his conscience did not accuse him of any scandalous and gross sin, which might blemish his Profession, or wound Religion; or I speak it not (such he) to boast of mine innocency, but thankfully to bless

bles God who hath kept me, who else should have fallen as well as others: And if it be an honour to be in Christ before others, as Paul makes it to be, Rom. 16. 7. So it is a great glory and comfort to a Believer, to be *Mnason* in the faith, and to be kept from those slips and falls which have brought down the hoary heads of many Christians with sorrow unto the Grave.

In his sickness, which was at least nine or ten months, there were many things worthy of our knowledge and remembrance.

1. That quiet and calm frame of heart which he enjoyed in that part of his weakness, wherein his friends and himself were not without some hopes of his recovery; he then told me, *That he enjoyed more peace and serenity of conscience, than ever he expected; and though he had no glorious comforts, yet had he no sad and discouraging fears; he could willingly submit himself to the hand of God, whatever the issues might be.*

2. The increase both of his comforts and confidence, when the decays of his strength were most sensible and visible; as the outward man perished, so the inward man was renewed, and filled with joy and comfort; as those many expressions which fell from him did abundantly testify: At one time, when there was some speech about his weakness, he suddenly break forth in such affectionate and vehement expressions, as still abide with me, and ring, as it were, in my ears: *I am going to eternity, I am going to eternity, unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,*

tem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God the Judge of all. Some few dayes after coming again to visit him, he said, I had thought I should never have seen you more, so near was I in my own, and others apprehensions unto death, being not able for some space to discern or see any body, but my comforts were such, as that I could not have born them, if they continued in the height in which I then enjoyed them; desirous I was then to have gone, but if it is Gods pleasure I should stay longer, I am content.

Lastly, His patience was remarkable under many wearisom dayes and nights, in which he not only wanted rest, but was afflicted with faint sweats, with pains in all parts, which drew groans and sighs often from him: These things (saith he) through the weakness of the flesh, will make me to groan, but I do not (I bless God) repine or murmur: And when his weakness was such, as that he could not speak much, when I told him I was glad to perceive, that death, though it was near, was not yet dreadful to him, he forthwith replied, That Christs death stood between him and death: And now tell me Brethren, Is he not a fair Copy for us to write after? May we not by him learn to live holily, and dye comfortably? It is not meet, that these things mentioned, should be scattered, as flowers upon his Herse, but to be as counsels and helps to us in the like time, which must, and will come, and how soon, who knows! All that I shall say more, is,

